

# ECO

## END FOSSIL FUELS NOW

eco@climateactionnetwork.org • www.climateactionnetwork.org/eco-newsletter • June 9, 2023

ECO has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at most international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. ECO is produced cooperatively by the Climate Action Network at the UNFCCC meetings in Bonn during the SB58 meetings.

*Editorial: Andres Fuentes*

## Start Spreading the News: Fossil Fuels Must Go Today

ECO knows how easy it is to lose oneself in the alphabet soup of the UNFCCC. The ever-expanding number of agenda items, acronyms and working groups make it easy to lose sight of what really matters in this session. This week Canada and the US are giving us a not-so-friendly reminder.

Canada is experiencing an alarming start to the wildfire season. It is currently facing over 400 wildfires from coast to coast, with about half of those considered to be out of control. So far this season it has experienced almost double the number of forest fires, and lost about 12 times the amount of hectares, as the average for the past ten years.

The smoke from the wildfires in Canada has blanketed the US Northeast and made air quality in the Big Apple among the worst in the world and has given us pictures that look straight out of dystopian movies.

This is not the first science fiction-like extreme event of 2023 and, as El Niño hits over the next few months, it sure won't be the last. So while you wrestle over GSTs, MWPs, GlaSS, NCGGs and GGAs, don't let smoke get in your eyes and distract you from the elephant in the room: fossil fuels must go. Now.

The opposite is happening, though. New research published here in Bonn by the Climate Action Tracker has shown that fossil fuel producers, especially wealthy countries, are acting like there is a gold rush going on, not a climate catastrophe.

We're talking to you, smoke-stricken United States! You're top of the heap among the world's fossil fuel producers. According to CAT, you have more than doubled your oil production since 2010.

Call it karma.

Canada, who is literally feeling the

heat, is also moving in the wrong direction on oil production, subsidies, and public finance for fossils. So are all major oil and gas producers – including, of course, COP28 host, the UAE, who instead of showing leadership and pushing for a phase-out of fossil fuels in Dubai, is promoting false solutions.

So before you head to your contact groups this morning, delegates, please take a few things to heart:

- We need to leave Dubai with a firm decision to phase out fossil fuels in a fast, full, fair, and funded way.
- No amount of carbon capture and storage will cut it.
- Public finance must be directed not to subsidize oil and gas, but to bankroll a just transition from oil and gas.

If you can't make it there, you won't make it anywhere.

## The Missing Voices

ECO notes the arrival of COP28 President-Designate Sultan Al Jaber at SB58 yesterday, fresh from his extensive travels around the world. He has made a point of meeting civil society representatives in many of the locations he's visited – though ECO wonders if he understands the meaning of the term, given the UAE's record on human rights: an effective erasure of independent voices in the country. All independent human rights defenders and many political activists are either in prison, or in self-imposed exile abroad, due to the high levels of repression in the country.

COP28 attendees - be aware and take the matter seriously. The country is reported to have invested heavily in surveillance technology and used it to target human rights defenders like Ahmed Mansoor, now serving a 10-year prison

sentence and held in solitary confinement for over six years. It's illegal in the UAE to criticize the government and even to comment negatively on the political system. ECO understands that 69 of a group of 94 people arrested between 2011 and 2014 were put in prison for up to 10 years simply for signing a March 2011 petition for democratic reform addressed to the country's rulers and many remain detained past the expiry of their sentences - a fact denounced last week by UN authorities.

Why is this important for the COP? Because there can be no climate justice without human rights. There can be no good decisions without the voices of Indigenous Peoples and there can be no justice without civil society. There's extremely limited civil society in the UAE left to monitor and hold the government

to account for anything, including its climate policies and actions. ECO knows that stifling atmospheres like this are more than likely to lead to self-censorship of those who attend, or even to some deciding that it's too risky for them to go to COP28 at all. So who will dare to speak up and call for ambitious climate action including a phase out of all fossil fuels?

The lack of critical civil society voices in the UAE, and potentially from other countries at the COP itself, will be a missed opportunity to have people's voices – including of those most affected by climate change - reflected in the outcomes of the COP, which will be weaker as a result. ECO says that now is the time for parties to stand in solidarity with, and be vocal in support of, all who are, or risk being, silenced. #NoClimateJusticeWithoutHumanRights

## Wake Up! Time to Fund NAPs

Though not an official SB agenda item, negotiations on National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are underway. But don't get your hopes up! ECO fears that the sticky issue of who is going to pay for their implementation could be yet be another clog in process. Meanwhile, developing countries are rowing against the stream to cover their ever-growing adaptation costs that are exceeding current international finance flows by 5 to 10 times.

All Parties agreed that the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries

Expert Group should join the exercise to tell us about adaptation gaps and needs. But the idea of inviting the Standing Committee on Finance to talk about finance gaps in NAPs implementation seems to be getting on some nerves. ECO is perplexed by how some Parties can emphasise the importance and urgency of NAPs while opposing talking about finance as a core pillar of NAPs implementation.

The time is ripe for ramping up synergies across the adaptation agenda. ECO repeats its earlier call for breaking the silos currently enclosing each adaptation related stream under the UNFCCC

by combining them under a single agenda item.

ECO proposes consolidating the adaptation architecture under the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and make it a permanent agenda item, so we can stop procedural rows like the one we saw today - and actually address developing countries' needs and the gaps for finance, capacity building and technology transfer.

What will SB58 have achieved if we all go home without actual progress on access to adaptation finance for all countries so they can develop and implement their NAPs?

## Has Someone Accidentally Copy-Pasted Monsanto/Bayer's Website into the New Agriculture Text?

That didn't last long. Any hope for a honeymoon period coming into the new Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on Agriculture is now well and truly over. If ECO were giving out Fossils of the Day here in Bonn, then the Agriculture negotiations would be guaranteed winners for today's prize and possibly even the Colossal Fossil of the fortnight.

The new co-facilitators' draft text is a large scale agribusiness buffet of greenwash and corporate control which will erode farmers' rights, push ecosystems to the brink and escalate the climate crisis.

The draft text proposes that future workshops and negotiations on agriculture consider how artificial intelligence, biotechnology, so-called precision agriculture and the dodgy corporate buzzword "Climate Smart Agriculture" are sustainable approaches. Has someone accidentally (or deliberately) cut-and-pasted this text straight from the Monsanto/Bayer website?

The agribusiness corporations hovering around these negotiations must be rubbing their hands in glee.

ECO is truly shocked that parties are pushing these approaches as climate solutions when they should be recognised as climate-destructive practices threatening food security, livelihoods and agricultural biodiversity of the world's smallholder farmers. Genetically modified crops are connected to the deforestation of critical planetary ecosystems such as the Amazon, the Gran Chaco and the Cerrado. Precision Agriculture is a term designed to legitimise the continued use of the synthetic nitrogen fertilisers made by burning fossil fuels which also pollute freshwater sources. Artificial intelligence in agriculture is likely to drive farmers out of jobs - a catastrophic prospect when fully one quarter of the world's population relies on agriculture for its livelihood. The term "Climate Smart Agriculture" might sound like a nice idea but has no definitions or exclusions.

Big industrial agribusiness corporations driving the climate crisis have long since joyfully adopted the term to try to give themselves a veneer of climate credibility - instead of taking the action needed to really address the climate crisis.

If these proposals are included as workshop topics and ultimately affirmed in agreed UNFCCC language, this could be another threat to the credibility of UN climate talks at a critical time when the world needs to pull together and move to real solutions for healthy, resilient and just food systems - such as agroecology.

Even though we still urgently need the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action in Agriculture and Food Security to find a new and snappy acronym (please!), it is even more urgent that parties throw these rotten corporate offerings straight onto the compost heap. Climate negotiations must definitely not be at the service of big agribusiness corporations' marketing strategy.

## Dialogue Anyone?

The co-chairs got it right: a dialogue implies an exchange of views and these views need to be focused on the critical issues. "Dialogue" does not mean a never-ending series of presentations....

Sadly, ECO can confirm that the first session of the second Glasgow Dialogue did little to put this into practice.

As a result, the first day of the "Dialogue" failed to make urgently needed progress. The urgency is clear. Parties received a mandate at COP27 to identify by COP 28 the operational modalities of a Loss and Damage Fund by defining its scope, scale, functions, form and placement in the evolving loss and damage funding architecture. It was clear from the majority of parties speaking today that this need has been recognised, but we are not getting the progress needed before COP 28 starts in less than six months.

The Glasgow Dialogue offers the opportunity to exchange views between Parties and with observers on how to realize a Fund that meets the needs and priorities of those whose rights are being harmed by climate impacts across the globe. It should not be - yet another - stocktake

(ECO reminds Parties that the Global Stocktake is taking place in another room) of what a diverse set of agencies all over the place are already doing. In other words : not yet another talkshop ! (Déjà vu, maybe?) We already know that what they are doing is not enough - they are not addressing loss and damage. The Glasgow Dialogue provides the opportunity, with glaringly obvious gaps, to explore ways to fill these.

ECO heard a loud and clear call from parties representing climate-impacted countries: this should be a dialogue that focuses on resolving the sticky issues surrounding the Loss and Damage fund. This does NOT include questioning whether a new fund is necessary, as some developed countries still do! That issue was resolved once and for all at COP27.

Now we need to focus on making progress towards a draft governing charter for a grant-based fund under the COP and CMA, aligned with the principles of equity and historical responsibility accessible to all developing countries. This fund needs to be responsive to countries' and communities' needs and

comprehensively cover the diverse consequences of climate impacts.

To make progress, including in advancing the work of the Transitional Committee, ECO suggests the Glasgow Dialogue goes back to its initial function: getting into a real in-depth exchange on the critical issues! It was clear in the dialogue that we need a fund to plug the large gaps, not simply promises to allocate some more resources to existing mechanisms including DRR, humanitarian assistance, displacement and/or insurance.

The Loss and Damage Fund must fill the gaps in a climate-just, human rights-based and gender-responsive way delivering to those who desperately need assistance and providing reparations for the damage suffered. It is not about the Early Warning for All initiative and/or the Global Shield. Or are we seeing a trend here, amalgamating initiatives and stretching the same promised funds across multiple objectives? This diversionary approach isn't in the spirit of the COP27 agreement and would clearly fail to respond to the needs of the frontline climate devastated communities.